

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT AU PRINCE 002869

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CAR
DRL
S/CRS
SOUTHCOD ALSO FOR POLAD
STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR
INR/IAA (BEN-YEHUDA)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [HA](#)

SUBJECT: HAITI ELECTIONS: "SE PA FOT MWEN" - IT,S NOT MY
FAULT

1. Summary: In a meeting with Charge Griffiths November 19, newly appointed Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) Director General Jacques Bernard lamented the failure of the would-be elections organizers: MINUSTAH, the OAS and the CEP. While the technical shortcomings at the CEP, MINUSTAH and the OAS were more profound than he initially expected, a first round on December 27 was still technically possible; but political infighting clouded the outlook. According to Bernard, sidelining the CEP and perhaps even replacing its members is the only way to guarantee a February 7, 2006 inauguration. However, political fallout from sidelining or replacing the current CEP members could exacerbate election delays in the short run. End Summary

"Se Pa Fot Mwen" - It's Not My Fault

2. Provisional Electoral Council Director General Jacques Bernard said in a November 19 meeting with the Charge that MINUSTAH, the CEP and the OAS have all failed in their mandate to organize elections. All three finger point when confronted with their failings and shirk responsibility by tasking each other. For example, though the OAS has not been prepared to distribute cards, it has focused attention away from its own shortcomings by complaining that MINUSTAH's failure to pick voting centers has held up distribution. At the same time, MINUSTAH has complained that the OAS has not finalized the voter list, which MINUSTAH needed to choose the voting centers. Meanwhile, the CEP, which passed choosing the centers to MINUSTAH because of its own failings, complained that some MINUSTAH-chosen centers did not have sufficient capacity to handle the voters assigned to them.

December 27, February 7 Technically Possible

3. Despite the failings of the three partners, Bernard insisted that a first round December 27 leading to a power transition February 7 remains technically possible. MINUSTAH elections chief Gerardo LeChevallier originally projected that once the candidate lists were finalized, MINUSTAH would need five weeks to organize elections. His team has developed training and organizational plans that if implemented immediately and not held up by any unforeseen problems would lead to elections December 27.

Machinations Wildcard Makes December 27 Unlikely

4. Though December 27 remains technically possible, Bernard questioned the political will for timely elections inside and outside of the CEP and said the likelihood of meddling in the electoral process increased the probability of unforeseen problems and more delays. Bernard questioned the will of CEP members Pierre Richard Duchemin, Patrick Fequiere and Gerson Riche and said all three had engaged in tactics to delay and de-legitimize elections. Duchemin, for example, insisted that instead of attaching a sticker to each voter's ID card telling them where to vote, workers distributing the cards should write the location on the back of voters, registration receipts. Not only would Duchemin's solution increase the time to distribute cards, it would require voters to keep their ID and registration receipt in order to vote and increase the likelihood of confusion on election day. Bernard also wondered about the will outside of the CEP for elections. He said the Haitian firm producing the ballot artwork, which had been working diligently November 14 - 17, completely shut down for the Haitian holiday on November 18, when they would have finished the ballot. Bernard posited that only a high-level order from a powerful person trying to delay elections could have convinced them to stop work.

New Bylaws are a Must, Firing CEP Could Help Too

5. Bernard said he must be given executive authority over elections administration and the CEP board members must be

eliminated from the process either through new bylaws or possibly by dissolving the board. The PM promised Bernard new bylaws by electoral decree November 14, but the new bylaws have not been promulgated. (Note: The PM on November 21 gave diplomats copies of the decree text which was marked with a hand written note indicating that the decree was published in the November 16 edition of the Moniteur, the official government newspaper. However, according to a source at the Moniteur the new bylaws and a decree finalizing political party financing would be in the November 24 Moniteur but the IGOH has delayed the edition because it does not have the money to fund party financing. End Note) Bernard said replacing the current CEP would also help expedite electoral preparations, though such a move would have to come from the political parties and the Council of Eminent Persons.

16. Comment: The CEP,s role creating election delays and the difficulty pinpointing the source of the delays outside the CEP makes removing the members from the process an interesting proposition. However, broad concern about a Preval presidency has galvanized other groups to seek a delay in elections, and eliminating the CEP could prove insufficient to unblock the process. Further, removing the CEP could provoke a backlash from Duchemin, Fequiere, and Richeme. Duchemin told Poloff November 16 he would respond to any effort to sideline him by publicly highlighting flaws in the electoral process. End Comment.

CARNEY